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AUTHOR Runyan, Charles Kent
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ABSTRACT

A needs-based developmental induction program for beginning teachers should concentrate not only on orientation and development of individual strengths, but also on the situational/contextual personal and professional concerns of first-year teachers. The successful program tries to identify and meet the instructional and noninstructional individual needs of beginning teachers and to develop their personal strengths. Such a program must recognize that the concerns of a first-year teacher are not always specifically associated with actual instruction and usually involve nonteaching duties, administrative details, human relation skills, and job perception difficulties. To help fashion a needs-based developmental model a number of decisions must be made to fit the characteristics of the school system. The size, geographical restrictions, and financial resources of the school system will influence the scope of the components. To serve as a possible guideline, a continuum of decision areas that should be considered is presented, as well as a list of the goals and critical components of this type of induction program. A 3-page chart detailing the elements of local needs-based induction decisions is included. (JD)

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No More Isolated Cinderellas At The Swimming Hole: A Call For Needs-based Developmental Induction

Dr. Charles Kent Runyan
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

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NO MORE ISOLATED CINDERELLAS AT THE SWIMMING HOLE: A CALL FOR NEEDS-BASED DEVELOPMENTAL INDUCTION

Charles Kent Runyan
Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, KS 66762

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It was just another day for Cinderella at the swimming hole. Today, just like most days, she would continue to swim the muddy waters alone, perfecting her strokes in hopes of reaching the distant shore. Unlike a host of other swimmers, she had to swim the deepest parts of the lake for Cinderella was new, and the others knew the hardships of the deep water currents. They took up the room near the shore. She would have to learn just like everybody else had learned - to sink or swim by handling the roughest waters. Besides, many thought that for her, the Cinderella who recently graduated from a science class in oceanography, swimming should be easy and she should need no help. Yes, till she could find an open swimming pool, it was just another day for Cinderella at the swimming hole.

Thus it may be for thousands of beginning teachers. Just like our imaginary Cinderella learning to swim alone in the roughest waters, too many of today's beginning teachers are learning to teach in isolation, in situations and climates not conducive to developing effective skills in teaching. They find themselves in school systems full of unfamiliar routines, habit-bound faculties, and evaluation by surveillance.

For too many beginning teachers, swimming the channels of today's classrooms and negotiating the complicated currents of the tasks of teaching are done alone and cause too many to choke and accept the course of least resistance. For too many beginning teachers the perception that they are Cinderellas who were magically outfitted as master teachers with their college degree causes too many to be placed in demanding positions no other teachers want and face too harsh a reality. For too many beginning teachers, the traditional idea that one has to learn for himself to either sink or swim has caused them to swim ashore and leave the profession.

Though a number of states and local school systems have developed induction programs of one sort or another, it is far from enough or comprehensive enough to meet beginning teacher needs; we still have too many learning to swim on their own, too many simply being evaluated and offered remedial help with little concern for the expressed needs of the teacher. Too many programs are simply another layer of evaluation, a deficit model that sees the beginning teacher as one who lacks specific skills and its role is thus to correct any specific problem areas.

To keep our Cinderellas swimming, it is time to promote and refine developmental induction programs that see the beginning teacher as one who has a set of skills and, as a result of the program, develops, extends, modifies, or refines these skills. It is time to develop needs-based developmental induction that roots its orientation and assistance on the perceived needs of

the individual teacher, not the sole evaluation of a principal, mentor, or supervisor. It is time to develop diverse programs that allow the first-year teacher to express his own concerns and offer a number of vehicles to motivate the meeting of these needs. It is time for induction programs to allow the beginning teacher to develop creative teaching ideas and new personalized ways of making a difference with students. It is time for induction programs to take the orientation that to really improve one must first see a need and have a desire to improve.

Developmentally, needs-based induction concentrates not only on orientation and development of strengths, but on the situational/contextual personal and professional concerns of first year teachers. It tries to identify and meet the instructional and non-instructional individual needs of beginning teachers, not just giving them a dose of standardized pedagogy and evaluating their mastery of the "golden rules." It tries to develop personal strengths and ideas to help change education for the better, not stifling the creativity and idealism of first year teachers by legislating dependency of accepted methods and materials. For it is only through meeting the individual personal and professional needs of first year teachers do we have a valid chance of retaining and developing consistent and effective professional personnel striving to master the art of teaching. It is only through giving a voice to the professional ideas of beginning teachers that schools will dignify, humanize and develop committed professionals.

Today's Beginning Teacher Situation

Though the research on beginning teacher induction is beginning to develop, there are indications that the waters are rough and there is a need for need-based induction. First, teaching has increasingly become a short-term career. It has been estimated that up to 30 percent of America's beginning teachers will leave the profession within two years and nearly 50 percent will leave after four years (Schlechty and Vance, 1983). Second, there will perhaps be a future shortage of teachers. With the expectation that demand will exceed the supply, it is imperative that neophytes be given the foundation and climate to perform and stay in the classroom.

Not only are we faced with high turnover and future shortages, the beginning teacher possesses some characteristics that make swimming difficult. First, it seems many beginning teachers are bearers of unrealistic expectations which may at times produce disillusionment, job dissatisfaction, and a yearning to leave the profession. They enter teaching with perceived expectations and needs, but the climate and environment do not contribute to their development (Duke, 1984). Secondly, there seems to be some agreement that the survival of a first year teacher is not always based on ability or training in academic areas but rather upon the ability to cope with noninstructional concerns. These concerns are not specifically associated with actual instruction, and they usually involve nonteaching duties, administrative details, human relation

skills, teacher professionalism, and job perception difficulties (Perkerson, 1980).

Finally, many educational systems create environments that force the beginning teacher to swim the deepest waters. First, beginning teachers are often assigned lower achieving students with multiple preparations and no permanent classrooms. Second, education is one of the only professions where first year personnel are expected to assume the full duties the first day on the job (Huling-Austen, 1988). They are expected to know the policies, norms, cultural aspects, and expected operational methods when they first report to school and are many times evaluated on such. From day one they perform all functions of the experienced teacher.

Today's Induction Programs

Today's induction programs have developed a number of ways to help our Cinderellas swim, but not all make the swimming easier.

Nationally, two years ago, only 17 states had induction programs in place, with 14 more states in the planning stages (Huling-Austin, 1988). To strengthen the continued possibility of funding, most of these programs had aspects of accountability built into their effort to improve instructional and management skills and operated from the deficit model. For many, the programs seldom rose above the procedural compliance level (Hoffman, et al., 1986).

Locally, however, hundreds of district or county wide programs have sprouted and offer the greatest chance of providing

a developmental needs-based program. It is here where the instinct to provide support and to individualize seems to be the highest.

Why Developmental Induction

Whatever the program, be it state or national, the best hope for a calmer and cleaner swimming hole rests with developmental induction programs that help meet the individualized personal and professional needs of beginning teachers.

On a broad scale, research on the effects of teacher induction programs points to support for giving assistance to the Cinderella swimmer through a developmental perspective. In the area of retention, Huling-Austen (1988) summarized that "the data reported to date indicate that teacher induction programs potentially hold a great deal of promise for retaining greater numbers of beginning teachers" (p. 21). In the area of performance, several studies found positive changes occurring on a variety of teaching skills (Summers, 1987; Elsner, 1984; Marockie and Looney, 1988). Most significantly, however, the research illustrates the positive impact induction has on the beginning teacher when it is developmental in support. Odell (1986) found that emotional support was the most beneficial element in the induction program, yet was not the major concern of clinical supervisors. In general, several studies found the inducted teachers had significantly higher positive perceptions about education than those who had no formal support (Huling-Austen and Murphy 1987; Summers, 1987).

Why Needs-based Developmental Induction

A closer examination of the research supports the needs-based developmental induction approach in helping Cinderella to swim the waters. Specific research on beginning teachers illustrates that each is different. "Blanket statements about what to provide for first-year teachers are not very helpful" and "our data seem to indicate that the most useful thing that can be done with regard to induction is to personalize and individualize this support and gear it to the needs of specific beginning teachers." (Grant and Zeichner, 1981, p. 110).

One study found first-year teachers to have different personality needs and behavioral tendencies that were illustrated in such factors as sex, marital status, age, parenthood, educational level, degree location, and school placement. It was also found that different school climates could influence the behavioral tendencies of beginning teachers (Runyan, 1988). With such diversity in people and variations in specific school climates, it is apparent that induction programs, to be effective, have to offer individualization and diversity.

It is also apparent from the research that beginning teachers need emotional support early in their career, a colleague to share their trials and tribulations during the first lonely months. In fact the emotional support was considered so important, it was concluded that instructional matters were dealt with more effectively once emotional support was established (Huling-Austin, 1988). Several other studies (Summers, 1987;

Huling-Austin and Murphy, 1987) suggest that when beginning teachers are not supported by a mentor concerned with positive emotional support, they tend to question their teaching effectiveness as well as their decisions to become teachers. In essence, though the research is not yet comprehensive, there are definite signs pointing to needs-based developmental induction.

If retention, teaching performance, and positive orientations to the profession can be potentially enhanced through recognizing the beginning teacher's individual differences and providing various types of personal and professional support, then perhaps it is time to pay more attention to the self-perceived needs of teachers. For example, research has indicated that the first year teacher has significantly higher needs than the average adult for hard work, perseverance, personal achievement, intellectual curiosity and orderly application of skills (Runyan, 1988). If this is true, it is time to base induction, to a greater extent than is now present, on the beginning professionals' own perceived needs and concerns. Beginning teachers can and want their career to be successful; they want to make a difference and want the support to do so.

Further research on general human needs consistently suggests that the self-perception of meeting needs through work is essential to job satisfaction and performance. However, what fulfills the needs of one person may be considerably different from that which fulfills the needs of another (Vroom, 1964; Lortie, 1975). It is the need-based induction contention that if

the induction support is shaped to fit the individual's own perception of needs it will pay off in honest long-term effectiveness and motivation.

Thus, though the waters may still be rough for many of our nation's Cinderellas, the swimming hole is getting smaller. More and more induction programs are looking for effective ways in helping the first year teacher make a difference in the lives of children. The rationales, goals, methods and participants seem to vary with each system. However, it is this writer's contention that only when the beginning teacher's own perception of personal and professional need is directly assessed and dealt with through a ho[illegible] support areas, there is a higher chance of long-term motivati[illegible] development, and satisfaction. Let's don't make it another year at the swimming hole.

Common **Local Needs-based Developmental Induction Decisions**

To help fashion a needs-based developmental model for enhancing the personal satisfaction and professional competence of the first year teacher, a number of decisions need to be made to fit the characteristics of the school system. The size, geographical restrictions, and the financial resources of the school system will influence the scope of the components. To serve as a possible guideline, the following continuum of decision areas could be considered (Runyan, 1990).

LOCAL NEEDS-BASED DEVELOPMENTAL INDUCTION DECISIONS

DEVELOPMENTAL PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION

Orientation	Professional Need Assistance	Personal Need Assistance	Combination

RATIONALES

Retention	Professional Competence	Personal Satisfaction	Individualize Needs	Vehicle for Remediation

Recruitment	Instructional Quality	Developmental Growth	Climate Support

GOALS

Orderly Transition	Skill Development	Interpreting/ Coping with Needs	Feedback to Skill Development

Retention/ Recruitment	Problem Reduction	Positive Role Development	Positive Climate

CLIENT IDENTIFICATION

1st Year (0 yrs)	1st Year (Exp.)	2nd Year	3nd Year	Uncertified Personnel

Substitutes	Paraprofessionals	Student Teachers

CLIENT PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Voluntary	Elective	Mandatory

PROGRAM TIME SPAN

Half Sem One Sem One Year Two Years Three Years Continuous

[---1----------1----------1----------1----------1----------1------]

COMPENSATION FOR CLIENTS AND MENTORS

None Inservice Credit Reduced Class Load Compensation

[--1--------1-------------1-----------------1-----]

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Local	Consortium	Collaborative
Supervisors	Two Districts	RESA
Principals	One County	State Department
Mentors	Regional Districts	University

[---1--------------------1----------------------1---------]

LOCAL PERSONNEL INVOLVEMENT

Principal Central Office Trained Mentor Peers University RESA Team Consultants

[---1---------1----------1---------1----------1----------1-------1--]

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR MENTORS

Willingness to Commit Positive Attitude Success As Teacher Same Subject Same Location Compatible Philosophy

[-----1-------------1-------------1----------1----------1---------1----]

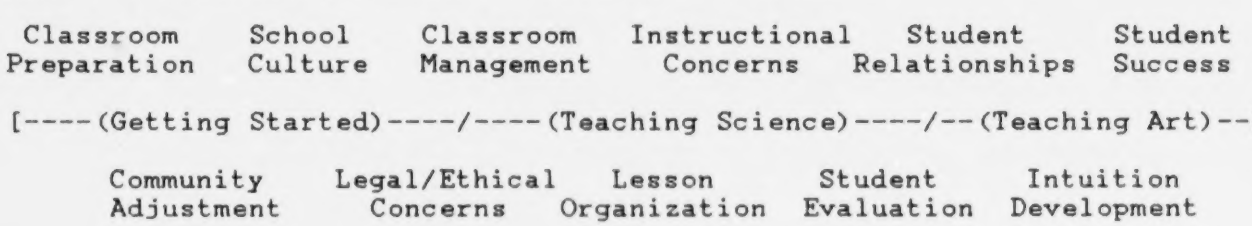
MENTOR TRAINING METHODS

Local Staff Outside Agency Consultant State Department RESA University

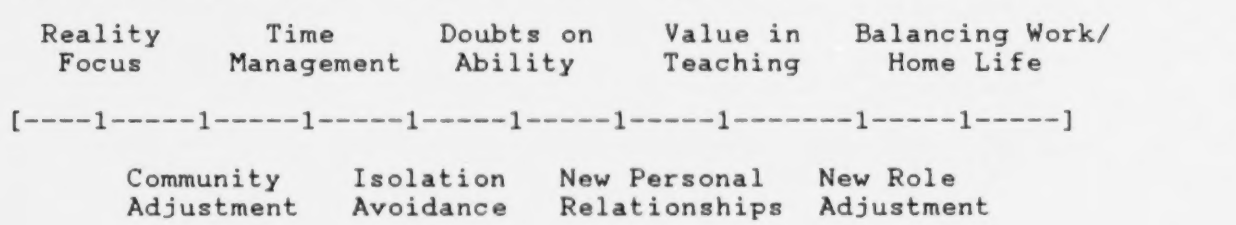
[----1----1----1----1------1-----1-----1-----1-----1-----1-----1---]

Field Supervision Inservice Seminars College Course Training Conferences

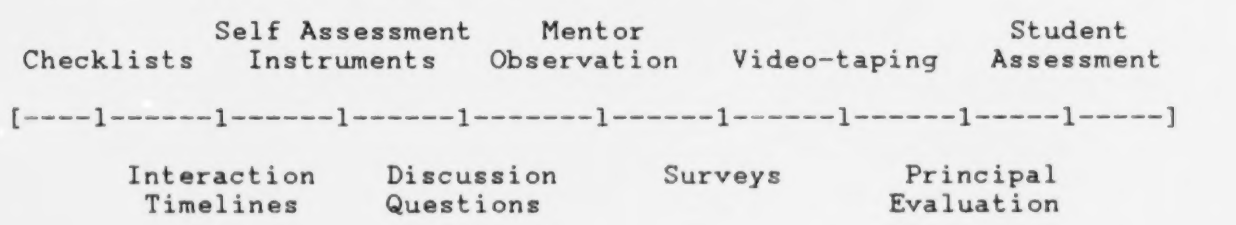
MENTOR PROFESSIONAL FOCUS WITH BEGINNING TEACHER



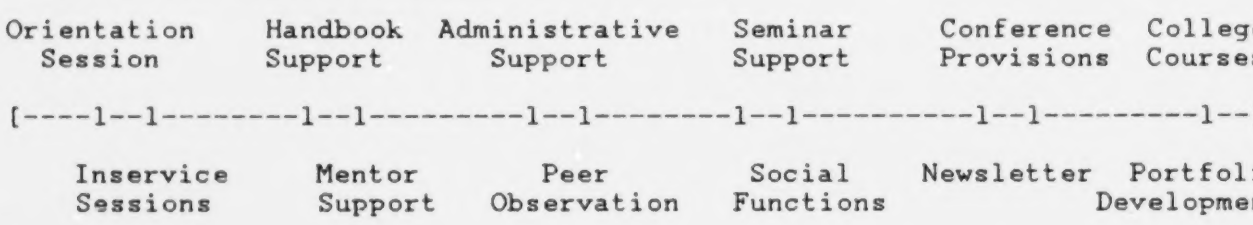
MENTOR PERSONAL FOCUS WITH BEGINNING TEACHER



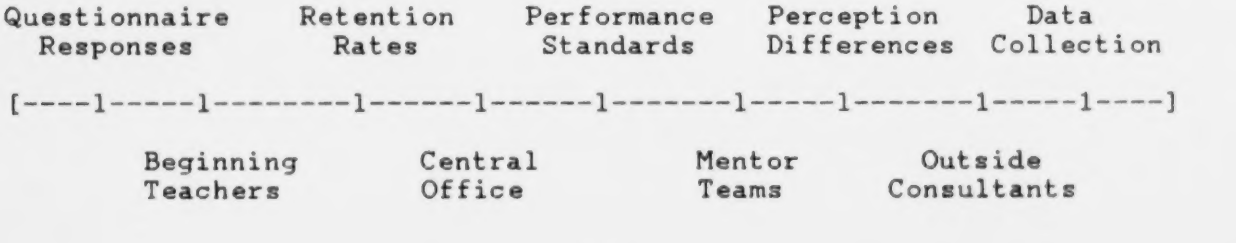
METHODS OF BEGINNING TEACHER NEEDS ASSESSMENT



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS



METHODS TO EVALUATE PROGRAM



Summary

In summary, an effective needs-based induction program should strive to:

1. have a developmental philosophy that sees the beginning teacher as one who has a set of skills and needs and, as a result of the program:
    a. develops, extends, modifies, or refines these skills;
    b. orients the beginning teacher to the school system; and
    c. addresses and meets the perceived personal and professional needs of the teacher;

2. have a well defined set of rationales and goals;

3. provide continuous year-long support from the preschool orientation meeting to the end of the induction timeframe through various organized support systems;

4. use various personnel to offer a vast array of materials, instruments, and activities to personalize each beginning teacher's year;

5. have mentors selected, compensated, trained and focused using the current knowledge available about the first year teacher;

6. provide daily support interaction and targeted interaction topics to help the beginning teacher in adjusting, expressing needs, and developing;

7. offer a large number of instructional and non-instructional areas on which the beginning teacher could focus when the need surfaces;

8. not interfere with the school's evaluation system but allow for the program to provide an improvement system for any weaknesses found in the formal evaluation; and

9. be able to show positive growth from the beginning teacher's own perception of skills and knowledge as well as other data.

By providing a needs-based developmental environment that is positive (not punitive), collegial, and oriented towards meeting

the concerns and needs of beginning teachers as they perceive them, an induction program will have a good chance of penetrating the isolation so destructive to beginning teachers. By being developmental and not evaluative there is positive, non-threatening interaction for beginning teachers. Needs-based developmental induction allows for teachers to perceive their own needs of improvement and offers feedback on those perceptions in a non-evaluative, positive manner. It takes the orientation that to really improve one must first see a need and have a desire to improve.

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